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PM talks voter list with three ministers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday met three of her senior cabinet colleagues to discuss the case in the High Court concerning the voter list and the latest developments in the political arena.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Health Minister Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain went to the

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Brac engineer gunned down in Afghanistan

AGENCIES, Kandahar, Afghanistan

Gunmen shot dead a Bangladeshi aid worker Monday after his prayers at a mosque in volatile southern Afghanistan, a provincial official said yesterday.

Mir Wais was gunned down Monday in Lashkargah, the capital of insurgency-hit Helmand province, deputy governor Moheedin

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Agora fined Tk 1 lakh by mobile court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday fined Agora chain shop Tk 1 lakh for selling date-expired food items, products without BSTI label, and for barring the court from doing its duty.

A total of 18 mobile courts

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Huge arms haul in Bandarban forest

Cache includes AK47, M16 rifles, 7,000 bullets; 3 Arakan rebels held

MONIRUL ISLAM MONU, Bandarban

Security forces yesterday captured three Arakan rebels and seized a big cache of arms and ammunition, including light machine gun (LMG), AK47 and M16 automatic rifles, from a den in the remote forests of Nalkhongchhari in the district.

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Arms and ammunition seized by a joint force of army and BDR from a remote forest in Nalkhongchhari yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Indian home minister visits Tinbigha

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil yesterday visited the Tinbigha corridor in Coochbehar district of West Bengal and crossed over to Panbari check-post in Patgram in Bangladesh where he met senior officials of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).

The BDR personnel at Panbari gave a guard of honour to Patil, who arrived in an Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopter from Silliguri in the morning. He was accompanied by Coochbehar District Magistrate Dr Ravinder Singh and officials of Border Security Force (BSF).

The minister signed the visitor's book at the specially constructed camp at the check-post. He took

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PROGRESS IN BOMB BLAST PROBES Govt gives flimsy report to HC

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Government is playing hide-and-seek, as it makes public almost nothing of the probe findings into the bomb attacks and keeps the High Court (HC) in the dark about the key features of the progress in investigations violating an HC order.

On a writ petition an HC bench on November 30 ordered the government to submit progress reports on the investigations into the bomb attacks since August 17 to it every two weeks.

Accordingly, the government

did submit two reports on December 13 and 27. But, the almost identical reports contain some statistics only. In no way they describe or facilitate getting a picture of the progress made in the probes.

The petitioner, Bangladesh Bar Council Human Rights Committee Chairman ZI Khan Panna, said they are considering taking legal steps against what he termed the incomplete reports.

"We'll ask the court to judge whether the reports are acceptable at all," he told The Daily Star last night.

The government had repeatedly claimed that it would be able to unveil the mystery of the country-wide bomb attacks, once it could arrest some top guns of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the banned Islamist outfit which claimed responsibility of the terror strikes. But, even after the arrests of two JMB Majlis-e-Sura members - JMB chief Abdul Rahman's brother Ataur Rahman Sunny, military chief of JMB, and Rahman's son-in-law Abdul Awal - and a number of regional commanders, it is yet to disclose any

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FRESH ELECTORAL ROLL Hindu areas in Ctg still out of listing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the predominantly religious minority populated areas in the port city have yet to be visited by the enumerators although three days have passed since the start of work for controversial fresh electoral roll.

In Barisal, the leaders of the main opposition Awami League (AL) allege that BNP activists have been appointed enumerators to manoeuvre the listing process in favour of the ruling alliance. Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (Fema), an election observing

body, too has noticed anomaly in preparing the list.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports: Many intending electors in Chittagong alleged yesterday that the enumerators are skipping places populated mainly by the minorities.

The local leaders of the ruling alliance by their uncalled-for supervision service have been trying to make sure the enumeration staff do not enter the places having a population showing allegiance to the opposition, they added.

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FRESH VOTER LIST HC orders on writs today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) is likely to pass its order today on the two writ petitions challenging the validity of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Justice MA Aziz's unilateral decision to prepare a fresh voter list against the opinion of the two election commissioners.

The HC bench hearing the petitions was likely to deliver its order yesterday but counsels for the petitioners and the defence continued their submission till the end of court hours, delaying the process.

Newsmen were not allowed to enter the courtroom. Lawyers told them later chaos broke out during

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Huge piles of fertiliser bags at Gabtoli in the capital await distribution as fertiliser traders' strike delayed its supply to farmers in the peak season of Boro.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Security upped at Shahjibazar gas field after JMB threat

BDNEWS, Habiganj

The authorities have beefed up security in and around Shahjibazar gas field in Habiganj following Monday's JMB threat to blow up the field.

Habiganj police yesterday said they deployed additional forces to ensure the security of the gas field as they have taken the threat seriously.

Police sources said they received a complaint from Shahjibazar gas field that its deputy general manager had received a letter from Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

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BNP fully focused on elections Kicks off divisional rally series at Ctg on Jan 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While facing the opposition's oust government movement politically, the ruling BNP is embarking on a series of programmes as part of its year-long preparations for the coming general elections.

Drafting the election manifesto, activating the organisational network, stepping up mass contact and preliminary selection of probable candidates are high on the party programmes.

The party is virtually going for pre-election campaigns from the very beginning of the new year as the coalition government led by it has only about 10 months of its tenure.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told The Daily Star since the current is considered as the election year, his party has naturally started preparations for the

polls. He hoped to see a change of government through a free and fair election.

BNP PROGRAMMES
As part of a countrywide mass contact, the BNP will hold grand rallies in the six divisional headquarters by June with the first one in Chittagong on January 8.

The party also plans to hold division-wise extended meetings towards the middle of this year to give its grassroots level leaders and activists directions about campaigning for the next elections.

Schedules for public meetings across the country to be addressed

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We Mourn

We sadly mourn the untimely demise of Dr. Sultan Mahmud Reza, the eldest son of Late Alhaj M. A. Rashid (former Secretary, Government of Bangladesh) and elder brother of Mr. Hasan Mahmood Raja, Chairman of United Group. Dr. Sultan Mahmud breathed his last due to sudden brain hemorrhage at King Khaled University Hospital, Riyadh, KSA on Friday 30 December 2005 at 6:55 pm Bangladesh time (Inna Lilla-hi wa Innaa Ilaihi Ra-jun). He was 50 and till his death he served as Consultant in Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery Department at King Khaled University Hospital, KSA. He left behind his wife, two sons, grand mother, mother, two brothers, one sister and a host of well wishers to mourn his death. He was a great humanitarian and rendered health services to many people of Bangladesh. At his death Bangladesh has lost a great son of her soil.

The Directors and all members of United Group are deeply shocked at the sad and premature demise of Dr. Sultan Mahmud.

May Almighty Allah bestow strength and solace to his family members, relatives, friends and well wishers to bear this irreparable loss. We also pray for eternal peace and Magferat for him.

Directors & all Members, United Group

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